

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH
DR. H. CHRISTOPHER PETERSON

Dr. H. Christopher (Chris) Peterson is the Homer Nowlin Chair of Consumer-Responsive Agriculture and professor of Agricultural Economics at Michigan State University. Dr. Peterson's mission as the Nowlin Chair is to provide leadership to university and industry efforts focused on the development and marketing of differentiated, consumer-oriented products based on agricultural goods.

He is also Director of the MSU Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Center focuses on assisting agricultural, food, and natural resource firms in the development of new markets, products, and associated supply chain relationships. Since it began serving clients in early 2004, the Product Center has attracted nearly 1000 participants to its educational programs, assisted approximately 600 clients with analyzing various aspects of venture development projects, and helped launch nearly 60 new ventures (either new businesses or new products from existing businesses).

Dr. Peterson has his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Cornell University and his MBA from the Harvard University Graduate School of Business.

In addition to his management of the Product Center, Dr. Peterson has personally facilitated a variety of strategic management projects for nearly 60 agribusinesses, food processing firms, and commodity associations. His research work has spanned the areas of strategic management, value-added ventures and differentiated product development, cooperative theory and financial practices, vertical coordination strategy, and supply chain management. He also does “futuring” to craft scenarios for the evolution of the agri-food system.

Dr. Peterson is the outside director on the board of Michigan Sugar Company. He has served as an outside director on the board of CoBank (1999-2001) and on the board of the former St. Paul Bank for Cooperatives (1994-1999), both part of the Farm Credit System.

Dr. Peterson is a recipient of the 1998 Michigan State University Teacher-Scholar Award and the 1992 Edwin Nourse Doctoral Dissertation Award from the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. He has served on the board of the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association and as an officer of the Agribusiness Economics and Management Section of the American Association of Agricultural Economics.

Before coming to MSU, Chris served on the faculty (1981-1991) and as chairperson for the Department of Economics and Business Administration, Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA. In addition to extensive teaching and faculty leadership roles, he established a small-business outreach center. He held a management position (1974-79) with Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Huntingdon, PA. His responsibilities included long-range planning, rate design, and member and employee relations.

Dr. Peterson grew up on a dairy farm in Nook, PA and served on the national 4-H Report-to-the-Nation Team (1969).